

HOUSE BILL 433

By Williams

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
Chapter 7, Part 13, relative to education for
veterans and service members.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-7-1309, is amended by deleting the section in its entirety and substituting instead the following:

On or before July 31, 2017, and on or before July 31 of each subsequent year, any campus meeting the qualification criteria and attaining the VETS campus designation shall provide the following data to THEC:

- (1) The number of veterans enrolled at its campus;
- (2) The programs of study in which veterans are enrolled;
- (3) The completion of degrees or other credentials by veterans; and
- (4) A current list of course equivalencies for military education, training, and experience.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-7-1310, is amended by deleting the section in its entirety and substituting instead the following:

(a) State institutions of higher education shall develop and implement uniform procedures for awarding academic credit applicable toward a degree or credential for military education, training, experience, and occupational specialties in the form of course credit equivalencies, and that these institutions readily provide these course equivalencies to veterans and service members as they transition from military service to higher education.

(b)

(1) To achieve the goal of uniform evaluation of military credit, THEC shall select military occupational specialties and academic programs with the potential to promote veteran credential completion and employment based on workforce needs and occupational demand. On or before November 1, 2017, THEC shall submit this information to the respective state institution governing boards for review.

(2) Following the review provided by subdivision (b)(1), THEC, working with the governing boards, shall convene appropriate faculty and subject matter experts to provide initial support as institutions develop course equivalencies, applicable to specific armed forces career fields, that maximize academic credit awarded for education, training, and experience obtained during military service.

(c) In developing course equivalencies and awarding academic credits, state institutions shall:

(1) Consider skills developed in all aspects of military education, training, and experience, beyond the physical fitness or activity components;

(2) Provide progress reports to the commission, upon request, as course equivalencies are developed and implemented; and

(3) Submit course equivalencies to THEC on or before December 15, 2018, detailing how academic credit toward the institution's respective credentials will be awarded. This data and information shall be submitted using the format and procedures prescribed by THEC.

(d) Course equivalencies developed pursuant to this section shall result in the award of academic credit to veterans and service members consistent with the standards of the American Council on Education or equivalent standards for awarding academic credits.

(e) Using the course equivalencies provided by state institutions pursuant to this section, THEC shall develop and maintain a website to inform potential students with

military experience of the academic credit available to them prior to enrollment at a state institution of higher education. The website shall include databases sortable by military occupational specialty, with clear descriptions of the academic credit available to the veteran or service member, the degrees or other credentials to which that academic credit is applicable, and the state institutions offering the credit and credentials.

(f) Tennessee Technological University is specifically authorized to assist the commission, as requested, by providing technical and other assistance in the development and maintenance of an electronic course equivalency database.

(g) The chancellor of the board of regents may utilize board office resources in furtherance of the purposes of this section and is authorized to adopt, where applicable and appropriate, uniform system-wide course equivalencies for community colleges and colleges of applied technology.

(h) The executive director of THEC is authorized to develop procedures and convene representatives from each state institution of higher education or system, as necessary, to affect the purposes of this section.

(i) On or before February 15, 2019, THEC shall submit a report to the education committee of the senate and the education administration and planning committee of the house of representatives detailing progress made in formalizing processes for uniform evaluation of military credit, and the extent to which the credit awarded will facilitate efficient and timely credential completion in alignment with state goals.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring

it.